

The Explosive Secrets of *Major Jordan's Diaries*

Major George Jordan started a diary in 1942 when he became suspicious of US-sanctioned air shipments to the USSR. But he never expected to uncover a secret American WWII deal to give the Russians the raw materials and know-how to make atomic bombs!

Part 1

Extracted from
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"MR BROWN" AND THE START OF A DIARY

Late one day in May 1942, several Russians burst into my office at Newark Airport, furious over an outrage that had just been committed against Soviet honor. They pushed me toward the window where I could see evidence of the crime with my own eyes.

They were led by Colonel Anatoli N. Kotikov, the head of the Soviet mission at the airfield. He had become a Soviet hero in 1935 when he made the first seaplane flight from Moscow to Seattle along the Polar cap; Soviet newspapers of that time called him "the Russian Lindbergh". He had also been an instructor of the first Soviet parachute troops, and he had 38 jumps to his credit.

I had met Colonel Kotikov only a few days before, when I reported for duty on May 10, 1942. My orders gave the full title of the Newark base as "UNITED NATIONS DEPOT No. 8, LEND-LEASE DIVISION, NEWARK AIRPORT, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, INTERNATIONAL SECTION, AIR SERVICE COMMAND, AIR CORPS, U.S. ARMY".

I was destined to know Colonel Kotikov very well, and not only at Newark. At that time he knew little English, but he had the hardihood to rise at 5.30 every morning for a two-hour lesson. Now he was pointing out the window, shaking his finger vehemently.

There on the apron before the administration building was a medium bomber, an A-20 Douglas Havoc. It had been made in an American factory, it had been donated by American Lend-Lease, it was to be paid for by American taxes, and it stood on American soil. Now it was ready to bear the Red Star of the Soviet Air Force.

As far as the Russians and Lend-Lease were concerned, it was a Russian plane. It had to leave the field shortly to be hoisted aboard one of the ships in a convoy that was forming to leave for Murmansk and Kandalaksha. On that day the Commanding Officer was absent and, as the acting Executive Officer, I was in charge.

I asked the interpreter what "outrage" had occurred. It seemed that a DC-3, a passenger plane, owned by American Airlines, had taxied from the runway and, in wheeling about on the concrete plaza to unload passengers, had brushed the Havoc's engine housing. I could easily see that the damage was not too serious and could be repaired. But that seemed to be beside the point. What infuriated the Russians was that it be tolerated for one minute that an American commercial liner should damage, even slightly, a Soviet warplane!

The younger Russians huddled around Colonel Kotikov over their Russian-English dictionary, and showed me a word: "punish". In excited voices they demanded: "Pooneeesh peelote!" I asked what they wanted done to the offending pilot. One of them aimed an imaginary revolver at his temple and pulled the trigger.

"You're in America," I told him. "We don't do things that way. The plane will be repaired and ready for the convoy."

They came up with another word: "Baneesh!" They repeated this excitedly over and over again. Finally I understood that they wanted not only the pilot, but American Airlines, Inc., expelled from the Newark field.

I asked the interpreter to explain that the US Army has no jurisdiction over commercial companies. After all, the airlines had been using Newark Airport long before the war and even before La Guardia Airport existed. I tried to calm down the Russians by explaining that our aircraft maintenance officer, Captain Roy B. Gardner, would have the bomber ready for its convoy even if it meant a special crew working all night to finish the job.

I remembered what General Koenig had said about the Russians when I went to Washington shortly after Pearl Harbor. He knew that in 1917 I had served in the Flying Machine Section, US Signal Corps, and that I had been in combat overseas. When he told me there was an assignment open for a Lend-Lease liaison officer with the Red Army Air Force, I was eager to hear more about it.

"It's a job, Jordan, that calls for an infinite amount of tact to get along with the Russians," the General said. "They're tough people to work with, but I think you can do it."

Thus I had been assigned to Newark for the express purpose of expediting the Lend-Lease program. I was determined to perform my duty to the best of my ability. I was a "re-tread", as they called us veterans of World War I, and a mere Captain at the age of 44—but I had a job to do and I knew I could do it. The first days had gone reasonably well and I rather liked Kotikov. But there was no denying it: the Russians were tough people to work with.

As my remarks about repairing the bomber on time were being translated, I noticed that Colonel Kotikov was fidgeting scornfully. When I finished, he made an abrupt gesture with his hand. "I call Mr Hopkins," he announced.

It was the first time I had heard him use this name. It seemed such an idle threat, and a silly one. What did Harry Hopkins have to do with Newark Airport? Assuming that Kotikov carried out his threat, what good would it do? Commercial planes, after all, were under the jurisdiction of the Civil Aeronautics Board.

"Mr Hopkins fix," Colonel Kotikov asserted. He looked at me and I could see now that he was amused in a grim kind of way. "Mr Brown will see Mr Hopkins, no?" he said, smiling.

The mention of "Mr Brown" puzzled me, but before I had time to explore this any further, Kotikov was barking at the interpreter that he wanted to call the Soviet Embassy in Washington. All Russian long-distance calls had to be cleared through my office, and I always made sure that the Colonel's, which could be extraordinarily long at times, were put through "collect". I told the operator to get the Soviet Embassy, and I handed the receiver to the Colonel.

By this time the other Russians had been waved out of the office, and I was sitting at my desk. Colonel Kotikov began a long harangue over the phone in Russian, interrupted by several trips to the window. The only words I understood were "American Airlines", "Hopkins", and the serial number on the tail which he read out painfully in English. When the call was completed, the Colonel left without a word. I shrugged my shoulders and went to see about the damaged Havoc. As promised, it was repaired and ready for hoisting on shipboard when the convoy sailed.

That, I felt sure, was the end of the affair.

I was wrong. On June 12th the order came from Washington, not only ordering American Airlines off the field but directing every aviation company to cease activities at Newark forthwith. The order was not for a day or a week. It held for the duration of the war, though they called it a "Temporary Suspension".

I was flabbergasted. It was the sort of thing one cannot quite believe, and certainly cannot forget. Would we have to jump whenever Colonel Kotikov cracked the whip? For me, it was going to be a hard lesson to learn.

Captain Gardner, who had been at Newark longer than I, and who was better versed in what he called the "push-button system", told me afterwards that he did not waste a second after I informed him that Colonel Kotikov had threatened to "call Mr Hopkins". He dashed for the best corner in the terminal building, which was occupied by commercial airlines people, and staked out his claim by fixing his card on the door. A few days later the space was his.

I was dazed by the speed with which the expulsion proceedings had taken place. First, the CAB inspector had arrived. Someone in Washington, he said, had set off a grenade under the Civil Aeronautics Board. He spent several days in the control tower, and put our staff through a severe quiz about the amount of commercial traffic and whether it was interfering with Soviet operations. The word spread around the field that there was going to be hell to pay. Several days later, the order of expulsion arrived. A copy of the order is reproduced in the centre section of this edition, a masterpiece of bureaucratic language.

I had to pinch myself to make sure that we Americans, and not the Russians, were the donors of Lend-Lease. "After all, Jordan," I told myself, "you don't know the details of the *whole* operation; this is only one part of it. You're a soldier, and besides, you were warned that this would be a tough assignment." At the same time, however, I decided to start a diary, and to collect records of one kind and another and make notes and memos of everything that occurred. This was a more important decision than I then realized.

Keeping a record wasn't exactly a revolutionary idea in the Army. I can still see Sergeant Cook, at Kelly Field, Texas, in 1917, with his sandy thatch and ruddy face, as he addressed me, a 19-year-old corporal, from the infinite superiority of a master sergeant in the regular Army: "Jordan, if you want to get along, keep your eyes and your ears open, keep your big mouth shut, and keep a copy of everything!"

Now I felt a foreboding that one day there would be a thorough investigation of Russian Lend-Lease. I was only one cog in the machinery. Yet because of the fact that I couldn't know the details of high-level strategy, I began the Jordan diaries...

At this time I knew nothing whatever about the atomic bomb. The words "uranium" and "Manhattan Engineering District" were unknown to me.

THE "BOMB POWDER" FOLDERS

In my capacity as Liaison Officer, I began helping the Russians with necessary paper work and assisted them in telephoning to the various factories to expedite the movement of supplies to catch particular convoys. As Colonel Kotikov communicated with the many different officials in the Soviet Government Purchasing Commission, their names became more and more familiar to me.

Few of the American officers who came in casual contact with the Russians ever got to see any of their records. But the more I helped Rodzevitch and Colonel Kotikov, the more cordial they became. It became customary for me to leaf through their papers to get shipping documents, and to prepare them in folders for quick attention when they reported back to Washington.

At this time I knew nothing whatever about the atomic bomb. The words "uranium" and "Manhattan Engineering District" were unknown to me. But I became aware that certain folders were being held to one side on Colonel Kotikov's desk for the accumulation of a very special chemical plant. In fact, this chemical plant was referred to by Colonel Kotikov as a "bomb powder" factory. By referring to my diary, and checking the items I now know

went into an atomic energy plant, I am able to show the following records, starting with the year 1942 while I was still at Newark. These materials, which are necessary for the creation of an atomic pile, moved to Russia in 1942:

Graphite: natural, flake, lump or chip, costing American taxpayers \$812,437. Over thirteen million dollars' worth of *aluminum tubes* (used in the atomic pile to 'cook' or transmute the uranium into plutonium), the exact amount being \$13,041,152. We sent 834,989 pounds of *cadmium metal* for rods to control the intensity of an atomic pile; the cost was \$781,472. The really secret material, *thorium*, finally showed up and started going through immediately. The amount during 1942 was 13,440 pounds at a cost of \$22,848. (On January 30, 1943 we shipped an additional 11,912 pounds of thorium nitrate to Russia from Philadelphia on the SS *John C. Fremont*. It is significant that there were no shipments in 1944 and 1945, due undoubtedly to General Groves' vigilance.)

It was about this time that the Russians were very anxious to secure more Diesel marine engines which cost about \$17,500 each. They had received around 25 on previous shipments and were moving heaven and earth to get another 25 of the big ones of over 200-horsepower variety. Major General John R. Deane, Chief of our Military Mission in Moscow, had overruled the Russians' request for any Diesel engines because General MacArthur needed them in the South Pacific. But the Russians were undaunted and decided to make an issue of it by going directly to Hopkins who overruled everyone in favor of Russia. In the three-year period, 1942-44, a total of 1,305 of these engines were sent to Russia! They cost \$30,745,947. The engines they had previously received were reported by General Deane and our military observers to be rusting in open storage. It is now perfectly obvious that these Diesels were post-war items, not at all needed for Russia's immediate war activity...

It is true that we never knew the exact use to which *anything* sent under Russian Lend-Lease was put, and the failure to set up a system of accountability is now seen to have been an appalling mistake. But could anything be more foolish than to suppose that the atomic materials we sent were *not* used for an atomic bomb which materialized in Russia long before we expected it? The British let us inspect their installations openly, and exchanged information freely. The Russians did not. Our Government was intent on supplying whatever the Russians asked for, as fast as we could get it to them—and I was one of the expeditors. And when I say "our Government", I mean of course Harry Hopkins, the man in charge of Lend-Lease, and his aides. We in the Army knew where the orders were coming from, and so did the Russians. The "push-button system" worked splendidly; no one knew it better than Colonel Kotikov...

It had become clear, however, that we were not going to stay at Newark much longer. The growing scope of our activities, the expansion of Lend-Lease, the need for more speedy delivery of aircraft to Russia—all these factors were forcing a decision in the direction of air delivery to supplant ship delivery. It had long been obvious that the best route was from Alaska across to Siberia.

From the first, the Russians were reluctant to open the Alaskan-Siberian route. Even before Pearl Harbor, on the occasion of the

first Harriman-Beaverbrook mission to Moscow in September 1941, Averell Harriman had suggested to Stalin that American aircraft could be delivered to the Soviet Union from Alaska through Siberia by American crews. Stalin demurred and said it was "too dangerous a route". It would have brought us, of course, behind the Iron Curtain.

During the Molotov visit to the White House, Secretary of State Cordell Hull handed Harry Hopkins a memorandum with nine items of agenda for the Russians, the first of which was: "The Establishment of an Airplane Ferrying Service From the United States to the Soviet Union Through Alaska and Siberia." When the President brought this up, Molotov observed that it was under advisement, but "he did not as yet know what decision had been reached".

Major General John R. Deane has an ironic comment on Russian procrastination in this regard:

"Before I left for Russia, General Arnold, who could pound the desk and get things done in the United States, had called me to his office, pounded the desk, and told me what he wanted done in the way of improving air transportation between the United States and Russia. He informed me that I was to obtain Russian approval for American operation of air transport planes to Moscow on any of the following routes in order of priority: one, the Alaskan-Siberian route; two, via the United Kingdom and Stockholm; or three, from Tehran to Moscow. I saluted, said 'Yes, sir', and tried for two years to carry out his instructions."

(John R. Deane, *The Strange Alliance*, Viking, 1947, p. 78)

Where the US was not able to force Russia's hand, Nazi submarines succeeded. Subs out of Norway were attacking our Lend-Lease convoys on the Murmansk route, apparently not regarded as "too dangerous a route" for American crews. A disastrous limit was finally reached when, out of one convoy of 34 ships, 21 were lost. The Douglas A-20 Havocs, which were going to the bottom of the ocean, were

more important to Stalin than human lives. So first we started flying medium bombers from South America to Africa, but by the time they got across Africa to Tiflis, due to sandstorms the motors had to be taken down and they were not much use to the Russians. Nor were we able to get enough of them on ships around Africa to fill Russian requirements for the big offensive building up for the battle of Stalingrad.

Finally, Russia sent its OK on the Alaskan-Siberian route. Americans would fly the planes to Fairbanks, Alaska; Americans would set up all the airport facilities in Alaska; Soviet pilots would take over on our soil; Soviet pilots only would fly into Russia.

The chief staging-point in the US was to be Gore Field in Great Falls, Montana. A few years before the war General Ralph Royce, who had been experimenting in cold-weather flying with a group of training planes called "Snow Birds", had found that Great Falls, with its airport 3,665 feet above sea level, on the top of a mesa tableland 300 feet above the city itself, had a remarkable record of more than 300 clear flying days per year, despite its very cold dry climate in the winter.

If you look at a projection of the globe centred on the North Pole, you will see that Great Falls is almost on a direct line with Moscow. This was to be the new and secret Pipeline. The Army called it ALSIB.

But could anything be more foolish than to suppose that the atomic materials we sent were not used for an atomic bomb which materialized in Russia long before we expected it?

WE MOVE TO MONTANA

It was the coldest weather in 25 years when the route was mapped out. First of all, Major General Follette Bradley flew experimentally by way of the old gold-field airstrips of Canada. With the Russians he scratched out a route from Great Falls through Fairbanks, Alaska and across Siberia to Kuibyshev and Moscow. It is the coldest airway in the world across the Yukon to Alaska and through the "Pole of Cold" in Siberia, but it worked.

Colonel (then Captain) Gardner, our trouble-shooter at Newark, was one of the first to go ahead to Montana. Then Lieutenant Thomas J. Cockrell arrived at Great Falls in charge of an advance cadre to make arrangements for the housing and quartering of troops of the 7th Ferrying Group of the Air Transport Command, which was moving from Seattle.

Gore Field was at that time known as the Municipal Airport of Great Falls. Although it had been selected as the home of the 7th, actual construction of barracks and other accommodations had not been started. The Great Falls Civic Center was therefore selected as a temporary home, with headquarters, barracks, mess-hall and other facilities combined under the roof of the huge municipal structure. The Ice Arena was also used as a combination barracks and mess-hall, and temporary headquarters were established in the office of Mayor Ed Shields and the offices of other city officials.

For nearly four months, the Civic Center remained the home of the 7th Ferrying Group, while contractors rushed construction of the barracks, hangars and other buildings which were to make up the post on Gore Field. The group completed its move up to Gore Hill early in November 1942. The 7th Group continued to supervise all stations and operations along the Northwest Route until November 17, 1942, when the Alaskan Wing of the Air Transport Command was established to take over the operations of the route to the north through Canada to Fairbanks, where hundreds of Russian pilots were waiting to take over.

Major Alexander Cohn arrived from Spokane to establish the 34th Sub-Depot for the Air Service Command. It was this depot that supervised the mountains of air freight that originated from all over the United States and poured into the funnel of this end of the Pipeline.

Colonel Gardner arranged for my transfer from Newark to Great Falls. My orders designated me as "United Nations Representative". Few people realize that although the United Nations organization was not set up in San Francisco until September 1945, the name "United Nations" was being used in the Lend-Lease organization as early as 1942, as in my original orders to Newark.

For the record, I want to quote my orders to Great Falls, with one phrase italicized. One reason for this is that in 1949 the *New York Times* printed the following statement of a "spokesman" for the United Nations: "Jordan never worked for the United Nations." I thereupon took the original copy of my orders in per-

son to the *Times*, explained that this was an Army designation as early as 1942, and asked them in fairness to run a correction (which they did not do), since I never claimed to have "worked for the United Nations" and their story left the impression that I was lying. Here are my orders, with the original Army abbreviations [see text box below].

These official orders activating my post were preceded on January 1st by a Presidential directive [see page opposite]. This directive was addressed to the Commanding Generals of the Air Transport, Material, and Air Service Commands, through Colonel H. Ray Paige, Chief, International Section, Air Staff, who worked directly under General Arnold. This directive gave first priority for the planes passing through our station, even over the planes of the United States Air Force! It was extremely important in all my work. I quote from the crucial first paragraph:

"...To implement these directives, the modification, equipment and movement of *Russian planes have been given first priority, even over planes for U.S. Army Air Forces...*"

...The Russian staff had moved from Newark to Great Falls, with Colonel Kotikov still at their head. By this time I was on a very friendly personal basis with the Colonel. As human beings, we got on very well together. From the viewpoint of the usual Russian behavior toward Americans, it could even be said that we were on intimate terms...

THE BLACK SUITCASES

After my return to Great Falls I began to realize an important fact: while we were a pipeline to Russia, Russia was also a pipeline to us.

One really disturbing fact which brought this home to me was that the entry of Soviet personnel into the United States was completely

uncontrolled. Planes were arriving regularly from Moscow with unidentified Russians aboard. I would see them jump off planes, hop over fences, and run for taxicabs. They seemed to know in advance exactly where they were headed, and how to get there. It was an ideal set-up for planting spies in this country, with false identities, for use during and after the war.

It is hard to believe, but in 1943 there was no censorship set-up at Great Falls. An inspector more than 70 years old, named Randolph K. Hardy, did double work for the Treasury Department in customs and immigration. His office, in the city, was four miles from the airfield. He played the organ in a local church, and I was often told he was practicing and could not be interrupted. I took it upon myself to provide him with telephone, typewriter, desk, file cabinet, stenographer, interpreter and staff car.

Finally I was driven to put up a large sign over my own office door, with the legend in Russian and English: "Customs Office—Report Here". When Mr Hardy was not present, I got into the habit of demanding passports myself and jotting down names and particulars. It was not my job, but the list in my diary of Russians operating in this country began to swell by leaps and bounds. In the end I had the 418 names mentioned earlier.

Army Air Forces Headquarters, 34th Sub Depot Air Service Command Office of the Commanding Officer

Capt GEORGE R. JORDAN, 0-468248, AC, having reported for duty this sta per Par 1, SO No. 50, AAF, ASC, Hq New York Air Serv Port Area Comd, Newark Airport, N.J., dated 2 January 43, *is hereby asgd United Nations Representative*, 34th Sub Depot, Great Falls, Montana, effective this date.

By order of
Lt. Colonel MEREDITH.

Despite my private worries, my relations with Colonel Kotikov were excellent. I was doing all that I could do to expedite Russian shipments; my directives were clear, and I was following them out to the best of my ability.

Colonel Kotikov was well aware that a Major could do more expediting than a Captain. I was not too surprised, therefore, to learn that Kotikov had painstakingly dictated in English the following letter to Colonel Gitzinger:

Dear Colonel Gitzinger:

Capt. Jordan work any day here is always with the same people, Sub-Depot Engineering Officer, Major Boaz; 7th Ferrying Group Base Engineering Officer, Major Lawrence; Alaskan Wing Control and Engineering Officer, Major Taylor; Sub-Depot Executive Officer, Major O'Neill; and Base Supply Officer, Major Ramsey.

He is much hindered in his good work by under rank with these officers who he asks for things all time. I ask you to recommend him for equal rank to help Russian movement here.

A. N. KOTIKOV,
Col., U.S.S.R. Representative

When my permission finally came through, the gold oak leaves were pinned on my shoulders by Colonel Kotikov. This occasion was photographed and the picture is reproduced elsewhere in this book.

Now two other occurrences began troubling me. The first was the unusual number of black patent-leather suitcases, bound with white window-sash cord and sealed with red wax, which were coming through on the route to Moscow. The second was the burglary of morphine ampules from half of the 500 first-aid kits in our Gore Field warehouse.

The first black suitcases, six in number, were in the charge of a Russian officer and I passed them without question upon his declaration that they were "personal luggage". But the units mounted to ten, twenty and thirty and at last to standard batches of fifty, which weighed almost two tons and consumed the cargo allotment of an entire plane. The officers were replaced by armed couriers, traveling in pairs, and the excuse for avoiding inspection was changed from "personal luggage" to "diplomatic immunity".

Here were tons of materials proceeding to the Soviet Union, and I had no idea what they were. If interrogated, I should have to plead ignorance.

I began pursuing Colonel Kotikov with queries and protests. He answered with one eternal refrain. The suitcases were of the "highest diplomatic character". I retorted that they were not being sent by the Soviet Embassy but by the Soviet Government Purchasing Commission in Washington. He asserted that, whatever the origin, they were covered by diplomatic immunity. But I am sure he knew that one of these days I would try to search the containers.

They had grown to such importance in the eyes of the Russians that they asked for a locked room. The only door in the warehouse with a lock was that to the compartment in which the first-aid packets were kept. I put it at Colonel Kotikov's disposal. The couriers took turn about. First one and then the other slept on top of the suitcases, while his companion stood guard. Perhaps unjustly, I suspected them of stealing our morphine. They were the only persons left in the storeroom without witnesses.

At four o'clock one cold afternoon in March 1943, Colonel Kotikov said to me: "I want you dinner tonight." Then he doubled the surprise by whisking from his ulster pockets two slender bottles with long, sloping necks. "Vodka!"

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES WASHINGTON

January 1, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL, AIR SERVICE COMMAND:

Subject: Movement of Russian Airplanes.

1. The President has directed that "airplanes be delivered in accordance with protocol schedules by the most expeditious means." To implement these directives, the modification, equipment and movement of *Russian planes have been given first priority, even over planes for U.S. Army Air Forces...*

By Command of
Lieutenant General ARNOLD,

Richard H. Ballard
Colonel, G.S.C.
Assistant Chief of Air Staff, A-4

The invitation was accepted with pleasure and also curiosity. For almost a year now I had associated with Colonel Kotikov and his staff, but I had never dined with them. As a matter of routine they lunched with us at the Officers' Club. But at night they disappeared, wandering off by themselves to other restaurants or the dining-room of the Rainbow Hotel, where they were quartered. So far as I knew, this was the first time they had bidden an American to an evening repast...

At the Officers' Club we had noticed that the Russians were extremely absent-minded about picking up bar checks. These oversights were costing us around \$80 monthly, and we decided to remedy the situation. In the club were several slot-machines, for which the Russians had a passion. We decided to "set aside" one machine to cover their libations. Thanks to the one-armed mechanical bandit, we contrived after all to make them settle for their liquor.

Now, of a sudden, they asked me to dinner and were offering vodka, free, as an allurement. I could not help wondering why. Acting on a hunch, I excused myself from riding to town with Colonel Kotikov in his Pontiac. I decided I would take my staff car, which had a soldier driver; in case of need, I preferred to have mobility. I was directed to join the party at seven o'clock at a restaurant in Great Falls known as "Carolina Pines".

There was not much time, so I hastened to ask our maintenance chief whether the Russians were planning any flights. He answered yes; they had a C-47 staged on the line, preparing to go. It was being warmed up with Nelson heaters—large canvas bags, fed with hot air, which were made to slip over motors and propellers. (Winter temperatures at the airfield could be as severe as at Fairbanks, ranging from 20 to 70 degrees below zero. Oil would sometimes freeze as hard as stone, and two to four hours were required to thaw out an engine.)

The Russians wielded a high hand at the airbase, but I had one power they respected. Though Lend-Lease planes were delivered to them at Great Falls, they were flown by American pilots as far as Fairbanks. No American pilot could leave without clearance, and I had authority to ground any plane at any time. In my absence, permission was given by the Flight Officer of the Day. I called the control tower, gave the number of the restaurant, and issue a positive order that no cargo plane was to be cleared for Russia except by myself.

Occupied by these thoughts, I drove to "Carolina Pines"... The gathering consisted of five Russians and a single American, myself. Colonel Kotikov acted as host, and among the guests was Colonel G. E. Tsvetkov, head of the fighter-pursuit division of the Soviet Purchasing Commission...

With the vodka under our belts, we moved to chairs about the table. But at 8.30, when we were two-thirds finished, the waitress handed me a message in pencil. It notified me to call the control tower at once.

At a public telephone, in the corridor, I learned that the C-47 had warmed up and that a couple of newly-arrived couriers were demanding clearance. Without returning to the dining room, I threw on my great-coat, scuffled down the stairs and ordered the driver to race full speed for the hangars, four miles away.

It was mid-winter in Great Falls. Snow was deep on the ground, and stars glittered frostily in a crystal sky. The temperature that night was about 20 degrees below zero.

As we neared the Lend-Lease plane there loomed up, in its open door, the figure of a burly, barrel-chested Russian. His back was propped against one jamb of the portal. An arm and a leg were stretched across to the opposite side. I clambered up and he tried to stop me by pushing hard with his stomach. I pushed back, ducked under his arm, and stood inside the cabin.

It was dimly lighted by a solitary electric bulb in the dome. Faintly visible was an expanse of black suitcases, with white ropes and seals of crimson wax. On top of them, reclining on one elbow, was a second Russian, slimmer than the first, who sprang



to his feet as I entered. They were mature men, in the forties, and wore beneath leather jackets the inevitable blue suits of Russian civilians. Under each coat, from a shoulder holster, protruded the butt of a pistol.

It had been no more than a guess that a fresh installment of suitcases might be due. My first thought was: "Another bunch of those damn things!" The second was that if I was ever going to open them up, now was as good a time as any. With signs I made the Russians understand what I intended to do.

Promptly they went insane. They danced. They pushed at me with their hands and shrieked over and over the one English word they appeared to know. It was "deplomateek!" I brushed them aside and took from my pocket a metal handle containing a safety razor blade which I carry in preference to a pocket knife.

Sensing its purpose, the lean courier flung himself face down across the suitcases, with arms and legs outspanned to shield as many as possible with his body. I dragged one of the containers from under him, and he leaped up again as I started to saw through the first cord. At this sight their antics and shouts redoubled.

While opening the third suitcase, I had a mental flash that brought sweat to my forehead. The Russians were half mad with fury and terror. They were on both sides of me, in front and behind. Supposing in desperation, one of them shot me in the back?

There would be no American witnesses, and my death could be passed off as a "deplorable accident".

I called a Yank soldier who was on patrol thirty feet away. He crunched over through the snow. Bending down from the plane, I asked whether he had had combat experience. He answered that he had, in the South Pacific. I stooped lower and murmured:

"I'm going to open more of this baggage. I want you to watch these two Russians. Both are armed. I don't expect any trouble. But if one of them aims a gun at me, I want you to let him have it first. Understand?"

After a moment's thought, he looked me in the eye and said, "Sir, is that an order?" I replied that it was an order. He clicked the bolt of his rifle to snap a cartridge into the chamber and brought the weapon to ready. He was tall enough for his head to clear the doorsill. The muzzle was pushed forward to command the interior.

One courier jumped from the plane and sprinted for the hangars, where there were telephones. The other, his face contorted as if to keep from crying, began reknitting the cords I had severed. There was little trouble getting into the suitcases because the Russians had brought the cheapest on the market. They had no locks, but only pairs of clasps. All were consigned to the same address. The entry on the bill of lading read: "Director, Institute of Technical and Economic Information, 47 Chkalovskaya, Moscow 120, U.S.S.R."

I decided to attempt only a spot check—one suitcase, say, in every three. I examined perhaps eighteen out of fifty. Otherwise the search was fairly thorough, as I was looking for morphine. (Incidentally, none was found.) The light was so weak that it was impossible to decipher text without using a flash lamp. I had to take off my gloves, and my fingers grew numb with cold.

"I'm going to open more of this baggage. I want you to watch these two Russians. Both are armed. I don't expect any trouble. But if one of them aims a gun at me, I want you to let him have it first. Understand?"

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Using one knee as a desk, I jotted notes with a pencil on two long envelopes that happened to be in my pocket...

The first thing I unearthed made me snort with disgust. It was a ponderous tome on the art of shipping four-legged animals. Was this the kind of twaddle American pilots were risking their lives to carry? But in the back I found a series of tables listing railroad mileages from almost any point in the United States to any other.

Neatly packed with the volume were scores of roadmaps, of the sort available at filling stations to all comers. But I made a note that they were "marked strangely". Taken together, they furnished a country-wide chart, with names and places, of American industrial plants. For example, Pittsburgh entries included "Westinghouse" and "Blaw-Knox".

The next suitcase to be opened was crammed with material assembled in America by the official Soviet news organ, the Tass Telegraph Agency. A third was devoted to Russia's government-owned Amtorg Trading Corporation of New York. One yielded a collection of maps of the

Panama Canal Commission, with the markings to show strategic spots in the Canal Zone and distances to islands and ports within a 1,000-mile radius.

Another was filled with documents relating to the Aberdeen Proving Ground, one of the most "sensitive" areas in the war effort. Judging by their contents, various suitcases could have been labeled under the heads of machine tools, oil refineries, blast furnaces, steel foundries, mining, coal, concrete, and the like. Other folders were stuffed with naval and shipping intelligence. There seemed to be hundreds of commercial catalogues and scientific magazines... There were also sheafs of info about Mexico, Argentina and Cuba.

There were groups of documents which, on the evidence of stationery, had been contributed by the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce and State. All such papers had been trimmed close to the text, with white margins removed. I decided that this was done either to save weight, or to remove "Secret", "Confidential" or "Restricted" stamps that might have halted a shipment, or for both reasons...

Then I copied the legend: "From Hiss". I had never heard of Alger Hiss, and made

the entry because the folder bearing his name happened to be second in the pile. It contained hundreds of photostats of what seemed to be military reports...

A suitcase opened midway in the search appeared to contain nothing but engineering and scientific treatises. They bristled with formulae, calculations and professional jargon. I was about to close the case and pass on when my eye was caught by a specimen of stationery such as I had never before seen.

Its letterhead was a magic incantation: "The White House, Washington". As prospective owner of an 80-acre tract along the shore of Washington State, I was impressed by the lordly omission of the capitals, "D.C.". Under the flashlight I studied this paper with attention. It was a brief note, of two sheets, in a script which was not level but sloped upward to the right. The name to which it was addressed, "Mikoyan", was wholly new to me. (By questioning Colonel Kotikov later, I learned that A. I. Mikoyan at the moment was Russia's No. 3 man, after Premier Stalin and Foreign Commissar Molotov. He was Commissar of Foreign Trade and Soviet boss of Lend-Lease.)

— The Explosive Secrets of Major Jordan's Diaries —

A salutation, "My dear Mr Minister", led to a few sentences of stock courtesies. One passage, of eleven words, in the top line of the second page, impressed me enough to merit a scribble on my envelope. That excerpt ran thus: "_____ had a hell of a time getting these away from Groves."

The last two words should not be taken as referring to Major General Leslie R. Groves himself. What they meant, probably, was "from the Groves organization". The commander of the Manhattan Engineer District, later the Manhattan Project, was almost unique in the Washington hierarchy for his dislike and suspicion of Russia...

The first thing I had done, on finding the White House note, was to flip over the page to look for a signature. I penciled it on my envelope as "H. H." This may not have been an exact transcription. In any case, my intention is clear. It was to chronicle, on the spot, my identification of the author as Harry Hopkins. It was general usage at Great Falls and elsewhere to refer to him as "Harry Hopkins", without the middle initial.

I remember distinctly having had to remove that letter from a metal clip. It held two other exhibits—obviously the things

which [someone] had such difficulty in "getting away from Groves". One was a thick map. When unfolded, it proved to be as wide as the span of my extended arms. In large letters it bore a legend which I recorded: "Oak Ridge, Manhattan Engineering District".

The other was a carbon copy of a report, two or three pages long, which was dated Oak Ridge. If it had a signature, I did not set it down. At the top of the first page, impressed with a rubber stamp, or typed, was the legend: "Harry Hopkins" followed by the title "Special Asst. Co-ordinator" or "Administrator". I gathered that this particular copy had been earmarked for Mr Hopkins. In the text of the report was encountered a series of vocables so outlandish that I made a memo to look up their meaning. Among them were "cyclotron", "proton" and "deuteron". There were curious phrases like "energy produced by fission" and "walls five feet thick, of lead and water, to control flying neutrons".

Probably no more than 200 men in all the country would have been capable at the time of noting down these particular expressions out of their own heads. The paper on which I made my notes was later

submitted to the Bureau of Standards for a test of its age.

For the first time in my life, I met the word "uranium". The exact phrase was "Uranium 92". From a book of reference I learned afterward that uranium is the 92nd element in atomic weight.

At the time of this episode I was as unaware as anyone could be of Oak Ridge, the Manhattan District and its chief, General Groves. The enterprise has been celebrated as "the best guarded secret in history". It was superlatively hush-hush, to the extreme that Army officers in the "know" were forbidden to mention it over their private telephones inside the Pentagon. General Groves has testified that his office would have refused to send any documents to the White House, without authority from himself, even if it was requested personally by the President...

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